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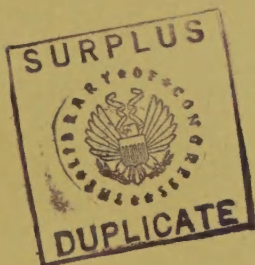
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The Madonna
of St. Luke



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THE MADONNA OF ST. LUKE.

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THE MADONNA OF ST. LUKE

THE STORY OF A PORTRAIT

BY

HENRIETTA IRVING BOLTON

ILLUSTRATED

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

NEW YORK
27 West Twenty-third Street

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BY

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

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My Dear Mrs. Bolton :

I have read with much interest and pleasure your account of the legends of St. Luke as painter of the portrait of the Virgin Mary, and as Patron Saint of Artists. Your investigations have grouped the various legends, set them in compact order, clearly illustrating the true story without losing the poetry and simple Christian feeling which lend such grace and charm to the subject. You have filled a gap in the history of Christian Art by tracing these legends back to their source, in a spirit harmonizing with the graphic truth and tenderness of St. Luke's narrative of the early life of the Holy Mary and her Divine Child.

Truly yours,

D. HUNTINGTON.

*49 East 20th Street,
New York, Feby. 22, 1895.*

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	I
I.—ST. LUKE AS A PAINTER	9
II.—HISTORY OF THE PORTRAIT IN THE BORGHESE CHapel	41
III.—INFLUENCE OF THE PORTRAIT UPON ART . . .	75
IV.—ADDITIONAL WORKS OF ART ATTRIBUTED TO ST. LUKE	94
INDEX.	121

ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
1. THE MADONNA OF ST. LUKE, FROM A FRENCH REPRODUCTION	<i>Frontispiece</i>
2. ST. LUKE SKETCHING THE VIRGIN, BY JEAN DE MABUSE	16
3. DONNA ORANTE FROM THE CATACOMBS OF ST. AGNES	32
4. THE ANNUNCIATION WITH ST. LUKE, BY BENE- DETTO BUONFIGLI	40
5. ST. LUKE PAINTING THE PORTRAIT OF THE VIR- GIN, BY JAN STRADAN	64
6. ST. LUKE SKETCHING THE VIRGIN, BY ROGER VAN DER WEYDEN	76
7. ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST, BY LE VALENTIN,	82
8. ST. LUKE PAINTING THE VIRGIN, BY RAPHAEL .	88
9. ST. LUKE PAINTING THE VIRGIN, BY MIGNARD,	102
10. SANTO BAMBINO IN ARA-CÆLI, ROME, ATTRIB- UTED TO ST. LUKE	112

And Mary said :

*“ My soul doth magnify the Lord,
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For He hath regarded the low estate of His hand-
maiden :
For, behold, from henceforth all generations shall
call me blessed.”*

ST. LUKE.

THE MADONNA OF ST. LUKE.

INTRODUCTION.



EVERY year on the fifth of August a curious and interesting ceremony takes place in the great Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. At a certain point in the elaborate service held on that day, attendants, stationed unseen, high up in the carved vaulting of the roof, throw down upon the crowd of worshippers below great quantities of snowy white flower petals. Thick and fast falls the fragrant

shower, until the kneeling throng is covered as with snow. In this picturesque and poetical manner is commemorated the miraculous founding of the mighty Basilica many centuries ago.

According to the old tradition, there lived in Rome in the year 352 a devout patrician named Johannes; he had no children to inherit his riches, and was anxious to consecrate the vast wealth he had accumulated to the service of the Church. This pious wish was shared by his wife; the dearest longing of both hearts was to discover what would be most pleasing to God, and they earnestly sought, with prayer and fasting, for a sign from heaven which should guide them.

One summer night each had the same dream; the Virgin appeared with all the pomp and power of the Queen of Heaven,

surrounded by attendant choirs of angels, and commanded that a temple should be built to her honor, and called by her name, upon the uninhabited slope of the Esquiline Hill, saying that the spot she had chosen would the next morning be found covered with snow. In the silent watches of the same night Pope Liberius had a similar vision and received the same command. Obedient to the heavenly message the next morning the three hastened to the spot designated by the Virgin, and found the miracle she had told them to expect had indeed come to pass, for there, and there only, the ground was covered with soft, white, newly fallen snow in spite of the sultry heat of August. The Pope at once drew in this miraculous snow the ground-plan of a great Church, which, built with the gold of the pious Johannes,

soon rose to the honor of Mary upon the hitherto desolate hillside.

This beautiful legend, which however, can not be traced back farther than the thirteenth century, is the subject of two fine paintings by Murillo, which are now in the Royal picture-gallery of Madrid. In the first, the Virgin appears to Johannes and his wife while they sleep, and in the second, they are seen telling of their heavenly vision to the Pope.

This Basilica, enlarged and altered by successive Popes, is now the largest of the eighty churches in Rome consecrated to the Virgin, and is sometimes known as Santa Maria ad Nives, in allusion to the tradition of its foundation, sometimes as Santa Maria ad Præsepe, on account of the relics of Bethlehem which are among its chief treasures, but is more generally

called by the honorable title of Santa Maria Maggiore, or the Greater.

Every tourist, no matter how short his stay in the Eternal City, and irrespective of nationality or creed, visits the stately church, and admires the beauty of its architecture, its venerable mosaics and paintings, and the wonderful riches of its altars and chapels. After the eye has become accustomed to the semi-gloom of the dimly lighted interior, and begins to examine more closely the glories faintly seen at first through the long vista of columns, it is most attracted by the two magnificent chapels at the right and left of the entrance.

Let the visitor come when he may, he will always find devout worshippers kneeling outside the iron railing which guards these sacred spots from invasion by

careless feet, while on Christmas and the other great festivals of the Church, many members of different organized bodies may be found performing their devotions at these favorite shrines. Groups of students in the distinctive costumes of the various theological colleges, young girls with the white veils of novices, sweet-faced nuns in black or gray, and delegations from many confréries and sodalities follow each other in quick succession.

In the chapel on the right are preserved the boards of the manger at Bethlehem, and other relics of the infancy of our Saviour, brought from Constantinople to Rome by St. Helena, at the same time that she enriched the Western Church with the memorials of the Passion still preserved in the Church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme. The chapel on the left, known as

the Borghese, is even more magnificent in its architecture and ornamentation than its opposite neighbor, and in it, over the altar, is preserved the chief pride and glory of the Basilica, the portrait of the Virgin which is attributed to the hand of St. Luke.

This small picture, blackened by age, is so hidden under the profusion of gold and jewels which decorate its shrine, that even on the great festival days, when the carved and gilded doors of bronze which guard it are opened, and people are allowed to gaze on it, the features can scarcely be distinguished.

But though the careless visitor will dismiss the painting and its traditionary history with a smile, the more intelligent will find it well worthy of study, for much that is beautiful and poetic, much that is his-

toric in its interest, centres in that picture ;
and in this sketch I propose to trace the
tradition of its authorship, its history, and
its influence upon art.

I.

ST. LUKE AS A PAINTER.



T. LUKE is represented as a painter by numerous legends, and the story of the first portrait of the Virgin is told in many ways, which, while agreeing in the main incidents, differ as to the details. Of these legends the most complete and beautiful is that given by the poet Schlegel, and I cannot better introduce the subject than by quoting it entire.*

“St. Luke, as he slept, heard in a dream

* I have translated this legend from the French, as it is quoted by Abbé Maynard in “*La Vie de la Sainte Vierge*,” and by Daras in his curious book “*La Légende de Notre-Dame*.”

a voice from heaven, giving in tones of authority the command: 'Arise, haste thee, go and make the most beautiful of portraits. Thou shalt paint the Mother of God, and thus portrayed by thy hand, her features shall in future ages radiate with a brilliancy which shall illumine the Christian world.'

"The Apostle awoke from his morning slumber, and still in his ear resounded the heavenly voice. He sprang from his couch, wrapped himself closely in his mantle, and departed, bearing with him his colors, his brushes, and his palette.

"He walked slowly in reverent silence, and ere long arrived at the humble cottage where dwelt the holy Mary. He knocked at the sacred door and asked admittance in the name of the Saviour. The Blessed Virgin opened the door, and re-

ceived the painter with kindness, speaking to him sweet and amiable words.

“St. Luke preferred his request : ‘ Virgin,’ said he, ‘ deign to honor with your grace and favor the feeble talent with which I have been blessed by God. Oh ! how greatly will my art be sanctified if unto me it is permitted to paint your most holy features.’

“Mary replied with modesty : ‘ Already thy art is blessed ; when it traced the sacred features of my dear Son, thy hand brought joy to my soul. Through thee I can still see Him smile upon me each day although now He tastes the repose and bliss of the celestial courts above. I however have still the form of a humble woman. Even in my youth I despised this terrestrial envelope of flesh, which now however shall soon fall away. The All-Seeing Eye above

knows well that never have I regarded myself in a mirror.'

"Reverently St. Luke answered: 'That which in you is pleasing to the Lord is indeed not the ephemeral flower of loveliness, the sport of passing years. But, oh! most happy of women, permit that others should admire what you alone do not see, the pure radiance of the God-given beauty which illumines your face. Consider the grief of the faithful when you have departed this life; do not deny to them the consolation it will afford those loving souls to pray before your picture. In future ages your glory shall be celebrated by every tongue, and lisping infancy and decrepit age shall alike supplicate you to intercede for them with the Most High.'

"'What! thinkest thou that I can aspire to so great an honor,—I who was not

able to save from the death upon the cross my dear Son? Morning and night in fervent prayer do I bend the knee before the Father of all grace, imploring His pardon and help.'

" 'Oh, most Holy Virgin!' cried the Apostle, imploringly, 'do not argue or deny me longer. God Himself hath sent an angel to me in a dream and commanded me to paint your picture. "Painted by thy hand" said the heavenly voice, "the Mother of God shall in future ages radiate with a brilliancy which shall illumine the Christian world."' "

" 'Be it so,' said the Virgin, meekly; 'I am ready to obey the command of the Most High. But if it be possible for thee to do so, renew in thy painting the bliss I formerly enjoyed. Recall for me the happy days when my Child, with divine

sweetness played upon the knee of His earthly mother.'

"St. Luke began his work ; seated before his canvas, his attentive eyes accurately observed the beautiful features of the Virgin. A serene and heavenly light filled the humble room, and angels came and went, silently moving their mysterious wings.

"They pressed around the painter ; one handed him his brushes, another mixed for him the colors, all were eager to do him service. For the second time an infant sat upon the knees of Mary, one of these angels, chosen by St. Luke from among the group, who were all ambitious of this high honor.

"The first rough draft was finished. Night fell, and darkness interrupted the work of the painter ; he laid aside his

brush. 'I can do no more to-night,' said he; 'I must wait until these colors dry, then I will return.'

"Several days passed swiftly away. St. Luke again knocked at the lowly cottage door, but he listened in vain for the familiar accents which before had bid him welcome. Instead he heard a strange voice which said :

" 'The spouse of God has fallen asleep, as softly sleep the flowers when the evening dew-drops fall. They wished to bury her, but radiant and glowing with light and glory she rose to heaven in the presence of the Apostles.'

"Astonished and joyous, St. Luke entered the house, he cast his eyes on every side, but though he raised his looks towards heaven, his intent gaze could not penetrate the skies. The image of Mary

filled his heart and mind, but he feared to put his hand to the picture he had traced from her living features. The portrait never was completed.

“Although unfinished, it was the delight of all the faithful, and awoke in all hearts deep feelings of piety and reverence. Pilgrims hastened to visit it from countries far and near, and all who saw the lovely face of the pure and modest Virgin received into their souls sublime benedictions.

“This portrait was copied a thousand times, so that through the painting of St. Luke the whole Christian world could see and admire the features of the blessed Mary. Imperfect as is the sketch of the Evangelist, it shall long continue to delight the piety and love of many generations yet to come.”



ST. LUKE SKETCHING THE VIRGIN.

JEAN DE MABUSE.

Another form of the legend narrates that the picture being unfinished was completed by an angel while St. Luke himself slept, and in reference to this tradition the Abbé Darras writes: "The hand of an angel, and one of those whom Christ chose to write his Gospel, were alone considered worthy to make the first sketch of the features of Mary while she was yet living. An angel and an Evangelist ! behold the first painters of the Most Holy Virgin."

A similar legend to this is connected with the famous Acheiropoëton, or picture made without hands, preserved in the little chapel of the Sancta Sanctorum at the head of the Scala Sancta in Rome. The outline of the head of Christ, according to the legend, was made by St. Luke, and found next morning miraculously finished, a perfect likeness.

Many books have been written in Latin, French, and Italian, on St. Luke as a painter in general, and on the Virgin of Santa Maria Maggiore in particular : they are curious and interesting, and by studying them we can learn the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church to-day in regard to this ancient and highly revered picture. The Abbé Milochau, writing in French nearly fifty years ago, reviews the entire subject, and argues in favor of the truth of the tradition from the details of the early life and education of St. Luke, which he relates as follows :

“ St. Luke was born in the city of Antioch, the centre of the Greek civilization of the Orient, which rivalled Rome, Athens, and Alexandria in the cultivation of letters and arts. In the education of the Evangelist nothing was lacking which might

serve to enrich or adorn his mind. That he was a physician, can not be doubted, in the face of the witness of all ancient Christianity, including that of St. Paul, and his writings show him to be well versed in the beauties of Greek literature ; moreover he was able, even as it is the fashion in our own day, to finish his studies by acquiring some degree of proficiency in the polite accomplishments of the time."

It is quite true that the various pictures ascribed to St. Luke do not show a master-hand ; both in drawing and in coloring the Virgin of Santa Maria Maggiore appears to be the work of an amateur not far advanced in art.

The Abbé Maynard, in his beautifully illustrated "Life of the Virgin," describes St. Luke as "at once the historian, the painter, and the poet of the Mother of

God"; and says "to him we are indebted for our knowledge of Mary in the dignity of her life, the beauty of her features, and the glory of her mind. Through him we learn of her Divine maternity, through him we can recognize her face, and through him, as the transcriber of the three inspired Canticles, the Magnificat, the Benedictus, and the Nunc Dimittis, we may read all the divine poetry which sprang from the mystery of the Incarnation, and the wonders of the holy Infancy."

In the preface to the same book is quoted a letter from the Apostolic Vicar of Geneva dated; "Oct. 18th, 1876, the festival of St. Luke, secretary, historian, poet, and painter of the most Holy Virgin."

Stendal, writing of the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, says: "Here in the Bor-

ghese Chapel is preserved the portrait of the Madonna painted by St. Luke, and many times during the past centuries angels have been found chanting their hymns of praise before the sacred picture."

Pope Benedict XIV. (1740-1758) issued a bull in regard to the picture in Santa Maria Maggiore in which he declares *ex cathedra*: "that it is not permissible for a pious and Catholic writer to think for a moment otherwise than that the hand of the Evangelist St. Luke painted for the Christian world the portrait of the Most Holy Virgin." Another and later bull is attached to the wall of the Borghese Chapel, making the same declaration in even more forcible terms, while the chants, prayers, and litanies used by the clergy of the Church reiterate in the most explicit language the belief of the faithful in this tradition.

Another writer says : " That the Evangelist was a painter, and that the same hand which wrote the history of the Son drew the image of the Mother, thus leaving to the Christian world a double and inestimable treasure, it seems to us difficult, not to say impossible, for a pious and humble soul to doubt."

These quotations will serve to show that the Roman Catholic Church to-day regards the picture in Santa Maria Maggiore with great reverence, and declares it to be the veritable portrait of Mary painted by St. Luke, while she was yet living ; but before we accept the conclusions thus taught, we must endeavor to trace the tradition backward to its source, and try to examine critically the testimony for and against its probability.

Prior to the sixth century no writer

makes any mention of an existing portrait of the Virgin, or alludes to the tradition that the Evangelist St. Luke was also a painter. In the year 518, however, a scribe named Theodore relates that about one hundred years earlier the Empress Eudoxia, widow of Theodosius the younger, after the death of her husband, made a pilgrimage to the holy places of Palestine. While there, at the request of the Empress Pulcheria, she collected and sent to Constantinople some of the most precious relics of the infancy of the Saviour, and of the Virgin; and to them she added a picture of the Mother of God painted by the hand of St. Luke. This portrait was for many years greatly venerated, and its history is connected closely with the last struggles of the Eastern Empire. In the earliest accounts of this picture, cited from

Theodore the scribe, there is, however, no mention of St. Luke.

An early writer, known as Andrea of Crete, who died in 780, declares that "the holy Evangelist St. Luke painted and sent to his friend and pupil Theophilus, in Rome, the precious portrait of the very chaste and always Virgin Mary."

During the reign of the Emperor Theophilus (829-842), the three Patriarchs of the Church, Job of Alexandria, Basil of Jerusalem, and Christopher of Antioch, addressed to him a synodical epistle, in which occurs the following precise statement: "The holy Apostle and Evangelist St. Luke painted, with the various miscellaneous materials commonly used by artists (namely, melted wax mixed with divers colors), the divine and venerable portrait of the most holy and chaste Mary,

the Mother of God, while she was yet living in Jerusalem, inhabiting the holy places of Zion. He made this portrait to the intent that all posterity might contemplate and admire the beautiful features of Mary. And when St. Luke showed his finished work to the Blessed Virgin, she was greatly pleased, and graciously said to him, 'My grace shall always be with this picture.' "

In the ninth century, Simon Metaphrastes wrote a "Life of St. Luke," in which he asserts that the Evangelist was a painter, and that there existed several portraits of the Virgin, and also of the Saviour, which were the work of his hands.

It will not be out of place to introduce here the oft-quoted description of the personal appearance of the Virgin. Nicephorus Calixtus, who, writing in the thir-

teenth century, gives it in detail, declares that he found it in the pages of a very early writer named Epiphanius : " She was of middle height, although some writers suppose her to have been taller. In manner she was always calm and serene ; no one ever saw her gay, nor troubled, nor angry. Her complexion recalled the color of ripe wheat, her beautiful and animated eyes were brown, almost of the shade of olive-oil, while her regularly arched eyebrows were of a dense black. Her slightly parted lips always breathed a gentle sweetness which gave grace to all she said. Her face was neither long nor round, but oval, her hands long and delicate with taper fingers."

This description accords in the main with one given in the eleventh century by Cadrenus : " She was of middle height, with

blonde hair, eyes of clear brown, regular eyebrows, medium-sized nose; her hands were long, her fingers taper. She loved for her dress wool which had preserved its natural color."

It must be said that the Madonna of the Borghese Chapel answers well to this early description of the traditional appearance of the Virgin, and the fact of this perfect accord between the written and painted pictures is most curious and interesting. Were the earliest painters acquainted with the legend which gave to the Maiden of Jerusalem a personal appearance so far removed from the Jewish type with which they must have been familiar, or did they evolve from their imaginations an ideal Madonna? The latter supposition is the most probable, and the pictures early painted in the days "when

art was still religion," formed the groundwork for the enthusiastic description of the writers of that and later periods, until through their joint influence the typical Virgin became fixed for all ages.

Though this legend is a very beautiful one, and though all hearts would fain believe that St. Luke, while painting in living words all that the world to day really knows of the life of Mary and of the infancy of her Divine Son, was also able to leave as a legacy to Christendom the actual portrait of the one whose face and form have been the inspiration of hundreds of generations of painters, the calm, cool, critical mind of the Anglo-Saxon inquirer to-day cannot be satisfied with the testimony and arguments considered as conclusive by French and Italian writers.

They "defy negative testimony," and declare that the absence of any trace of the tradition before the sixth century "proves absolutely nothing against its truth"; to them, the authority of a Papal bull is indisputable, and the evidence of art critics counts as nothing. One writer disposes of the fact that St. Augustine mentions that in his time the personal appearance of the Virgin, as well as that of the Saviour was utterly unknown, by saying that it was very likely that Augustine had never seen either in Africa or Italy one of the portraits of Mary then existing in the Eastern Church.

So "the truth of history must dispel this illusion," as it does so many others which are dear to us, and which we can with difficulty bring ourselves to disbelieve, even though common-sense, knowl-

edge, and evidence are against our faith.

As a matter of fact, the Virgin was never painted with her Son in her arms prior to the fifth century ; nay more, it is very doubtful if she was ever portrayed alone by early artists. It is true that many female figures are shown in the catacombs which are said to represent the Mother of Christ, but in most cases the dates of the pictures are much later than the ones given them by the guides ; and, moreover it is often very doubtful if the figure is meant to represent Mary. This female form, seen on early Christian sarcophagi, as well as in the catacombs, is commonly known as the " Donna Orante," or praying woman, and has been the theme of violent and prejudiced arguments between Catholic and Protestant

writers. As often happens both are in a measure right in what they claim, for while in some cases where the figure forms part of a group, standing with the Apostles, or by the side of the Saviour, it is undoubtedly intended to represent Mary; in others where it is seen alone, it is either a memorial of the dead woman over whose tomb it is placed, or is intended to symbolize the Church, of which it early became the recognized type.

The famous fresco in the catacombs of St. Agnes, a majestic woman of mature age standing with outstretched hands, and the head of a child leaning against her body, is often referred to as the earliest Madonna, but its date is very uncertain, some writers even putting it as late as the eighth century; by most authorities it is classed as a fine example of the

“Orante,” while others consider that it merely marks the tomb of a Christian matron who died in childbirth.

The history of the origin of the group known as the “Madonna and Child,” a subject which for hundreds of years has inspired the best efforts of painters of every school and nationality, is interesting. In the early ages of Christianity many strange doctrines were taught, and the Church was divided by “heresies and schisms,” the very names of which are now scarcely remembered.

Among these in the fifth century the Nestorians, whose founder was a person of no less importance than the Patriarch of Constantinople, held and taught that in Christ the twofold nature of God and man remained perfectly separate and distinct, and that Mary was the mother of the hu-



DONNA ORANTE, CATACOMBS OF ST. AGNES.

man nature alone, that the Godhead could not be born of a woman, and that therefore the title of "Mother of God," by which she was already widely known, was not only incorrect but sinful. Nestorius had many followers, but by the Church at large his teaching was rejected with horror, as involving the truth of the Incarnation, and the bitter feeling became so fierce between the opposing parties that blood was shed on both sides.

At length, in 431, a general Council of the Church was held at Ephesus to decide the question, and after long and fierce discussion, during which the pavement even of the Cathedral was stained with blood, Nestorius was condemned as a heretic, and his writings burned. The decree of the Council was that in Christ the Divine and the human were blended

in one incarnate nature, and that consequently Mary was indeed the Mother of God. Scarcely was this decree published, when artists, good, bad, and indifferent, began to paint, as a symbol of the orthodox faith, pictures of the Virgin-Mother with the infant Jesus in her arms. Every one wishing to show his hatred of the condemned heretic, or desirous of emphasizing his own orthodoxy, displayed this image, either in his house, or embroidered on his garments, or introduced as an ornament, or carved on a medal; in short, wherever it could be placed, the Madonna and Child became a recognized sign of faith in the teachings of the Church throughout Christendom.

In these pictures, however, it must be understood there was no intention in the minds of either priests or people of hold-

ing up the Mother as an object of adoration, rather did they emphasize most graphically and touchingly the humility of Him "who took upon Him our flesh and was born of a Virgin."

It was left for a later age to represent the simple, lowly, Jewish maiden as the Queen of Heaven, and to exalt her to a position scarcely lower than that of her Divine Son.

Most writers on art dismiss with a few contemptuous words the early pictures attributed to St. Luke, but Lanzi, himself a Jesuit, in his "History of Painting," treats the subject more at length, and by citing his words we will learn the opinions of the best authorities.

"Here and there in Italy," he writes, "there are preserved pictures by Greek and Italian painters of early times. The

first show us that the Greek artists travelled into this country, the others that they early found rivals and imitators in the Italian painters. One of these travelling Greeks bore the name of Luke, and to his hand we owe the famous picture in Santa Maria Maggiore, as well as others attributed to St. Luke the Evangelist.

“Who was this painter bearing the name of the Apostolic historian? Were these pictures the work of a single person, or must we admit that there were several of the same name; we shall see.

“The ancient belief in the authorship of these pictures was attacked by Manni, and afterwards by Piacenza. To-day it no longer has believers, except among the common people, and by this term must be understood all those who refuse to consider the introduction of a wise criticism,

and regard it as an innovation against dogma. This vulgar belief has against it the silence of all early writers, and the constant custom among the Christians of the first centuries of only representing the Virgin standing alone with her hands extended in the attitude of prayer, and never with her Son in her arms.

“ The general opinion of critics in our own day is that these pictures are the work of several painters who may have borne the name of the Evangelist. Lami quotes a tradition which tells that a certain Luke of Florence painted the celebrated Virgin of the Imbruneta, and most probably that of Notre Dame-de-la-Garde, (Monte della Guardia), at Bologna, as well as others attributed to St. Luke. The author of the ‘ *Anecdotes des Beaux-Arts*, ’ relates that in Greece he found the memory

of a hermit named Luke held in great veneration. This hermit painted roughly and with little skill, several pictures of the Virgin, and, through the ignorance of the people, the name of St. Luke by which he was known became in time confounded with that of the Evangelist. Tournefort, in the account of his voyages, makes mention of an old portrait of the Holy Virgin venerated in Lebanon, which was attributed to St. Luke, but which was in reality the work of a monk of that name who had lived long before and enjoyed a great reputation for sanctity."

Lanzi's views were confirmed in 1860, when, the picture being temporarily taken from its shrine in the Borghese Chapel in order to be borne in a procession and exposed in the Church of the Jesuits, it was examined by a commission of artists spe-

cially appointed. After a close and critical study of the painting they pronounced it to be undoubtedly the work of a Greek artist of a very early date, and to differ in many important respects from the recognized Byzantine type.

Like many other traditions which had their origin in the East, the legend which made St. Luke a painter was quite unknown in the Western Church until the thirteenth century. After the first crusade the returning soldiers and pilgrims brought back with them to their several homes many picturesque and poetical legends which had become popular beliefs in the East. In this way fragments of the Apocryphal Gospels and floating legends of Palestine and Egypt crept in, and, being gradually incorporated with the teaching of the Church, soon obtained a complete

hold over the minds and affections of the people of Western Europe.

But though we cannot believe in the traditional authorship of the portrait of Mary which we can see with our eyes, we must not forget that St. Luke, by giving us the few particulars known of the life of Mary and her character, did really in one sense paint her portrait. He recorded the Annunciation and made known to us the humility with which she received the angelic salutation, the Visitation, the sublime Magnificat, tells of her contemplative disposition, and shows us the fortitude with which she stood by the Cross. So it is indeed true that from the hand of St. Luke we receive the picture which was to form the type of perfect Womanhood for all generations.



ST. LUKE RECORDING THE ANNUNCIATION.

BENEDETTO BUONFIGLI.

II.

HISTORY OF THE PORTRAIT IN THE BORGHESSE CHAPEL.



It is impossible for us to give credence to the tradition which connects the hand and inspiration of an Evangelist with the picture which hangs in the Borghese Chapel of the great Roman Basilica, still, its history is of interest, and shows that for many centuries, it has received the love, adoration, and reverence of Popes, rulers, and people. The presence in Rome of the handiwork of the Apostle is accounted for in several ways, each theory upheld by eloquent

writers, and each tenaciously believed by many people. Taking them in chronological order we are told :—

First, that the picture was painted in Rome, during the time that St. Luke, as a faithful and self-sacrificing friend and companion, shared the imprisonment of St. Paul and that to enable him to paint such a picture the Virgin herself appeared to him in a vision ; the room in which the artist Saint worked is shown to-day in the oratory in the Church of Santa Maria in Via Lata, which according to tradition was the “ hired house ” in which Paul lived and wrote for “ two whole years.” This vision of St. Luke was a favorite subject for artists, as will appear later.

Carved on a marble slab at the entrance to the Chapel of St. Paul in this church is a Latin inscription, of which the follow-

ing literal translation is given in Percy's curious book, "Romanism in Rome."

"Alexander VII., High Pontiff—This place, sacred and noble from ancient veneration, in which it has been handed down from the first ages that St. Paul the Apostle lived for a long time and often deliberated with the head of the Church, St. Peter himself, concerning the business of the Christian faith, where St. Luke the Evangelist wrote and painted the picture of the Virgin-Mother of God, having subsided and being rendered inaccessible through the accumulation of earth, is now, by an easy descent of steps, by being thoroughly cleaned out and fitly adorned, and by the light admitted by windows, restored to the pious veneration of the faithful in the year of salvation 1661."

Secondly, we learn that the precious

portrait which was painted from the living features of the Virgin was sent from Jerusalem by St. Luke to his friend and pupil Theophilus, a dweller in the Eternal City, at the same time that the latter received the sacred writings addressed to him.

Thirdly, we are told that there are good reasons for believing that St. Helena, having been miraculously led to the discovery of the Cross, added to the various relics of the Passion with which she enriched the churches of her adopted city,—the nails, the thorns, and the blood-stained earth of Calvary,—the authentic portrait of the Virgin painted by St. Luke.

Fourthly, when Pope Liberius founded his new Church to the honor of Mary, he naturally wished to place in it a true portrait of the Virgin-Mother, who had herself chosen the spot for her temple, and

had by a miracle pointed it out to the eyes of her favored worshippers, and he therefore sent to Constantinople, the great centre of Christianity in the East, and obtained thence the sacred picture painted by an inspired hand and already held in great veneration in that city.

In the face of all these conflicting accounts and theories, I am forced to the conclusion that in fact nothing is known of the real origin of the picture, nor of its early history, nor of the way in which it travelled from its Eastern birthplace to the position it has so long occupied in the great Roman Basilica; nevertheless, according to a favorite tradition it was known and revered as early as the sixth century.

About the year 590, a frightful pestilence devastated the whole of Italy, and

thousands of people of every degree perished in the city of Rome, even Pope Pelagius himself falling a victim to the dread disease. Gregory the Great, generally known as St. Gregory, was chosen to fill the vacant Papal chair. During one of his sermons sixty persons were stricken by the plague while he was preaching, but the Pope, overcoming the natural terror which seized him at such a terrible scene, concluded his discourse, "to the saving of many souls."

All human means having failed to arrest the scourge, St. Gregory had recourse to the intercession of the Virgin, and ordered a series of solemn services in her honor, and, taking from its position over the high altar of Santa Maria Maggiore the portrait of Mary by St. Luke, he caused it to be borne in procession on February

24th, 591, through the streets of the city, in order to expose it for the adoration of the people in the church dedicated to St. Peter. The priests bearing the sacred picture and chanting litanies of supplication, were followed by thousands of despairing citizens, men, women, and children, all eager to put themselves under the protection of the Mother of God.

When the procession arrived at the bridge over the Tiber, opposite the tomb of Hadrian, a wonderful vision met the eyes of the astonished multitude. An Archangel of surpassing beauty appeared floating in space above the fortress; in one hand he held a drawn sword, which he thrust into its scabbard as the people below paused to view the marvellous sight. The sword symbolized the wrath of God,

the putting it into its scabbard showed the people that the intercession of the Virgin had been heard, and that the pestilence, with which for their sins they had been chastised, was stayed. "At the same moment choirs of celestial spirits filled the air, and chanted in sweetest music a hymn, which the Church thus learning from their lips has ever since used in her services."

With hearts full of joy and gratitude, both priests and people fell on their knees and rendered thanks to God for His mercy, and recognition to the Virgin for thus aiding them in their distress. In commemoration of this miracle a chapel was dedicated to St. Michael on the summit of the great tomb of the heathen Emperor, and later, the fortress was crowned with the beautiful colossal statue of the

Archangel, from which it derives its name of the Castle of St. Angelo.

One writer, in speaking of this miracle, says that St. Gregory had good reasons for making choice of the Virgin of Santa Maria Maggiore to be thus carried in procession, as it was already celebrated for the wonders it had wrought, as well as greatly venerated on account of its authorship, and at that day, as in later ages, the people of Rome beheld in it the protectress they had received from the hand of St. Luke.

Unfortunately this tradition, like so many others, cannot be traced back earlier than the thirteenth century, and two other pictures are shown in Rome as having had the honor to be borne in the memorable procession of St. Gregory the Great.

In the year 641, Pope Martin I. was saying Mass in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, when several soldiers entered the building, sent by the Exarch Olympias with orders to take and kill him. The Pope instantly invoked the aid of the Virgin of St. Luke, before which picture he was officiating, and at once the soldiers were stricken with blindness. This miracle wrought the conversion of not only the guard, but of Olympias himself, thus bringing great glory upon the Church.

In 687, Sergius I. instituted a solemn service in Santa Maria Maggiore on the Monday of the Rogation Days, with special prayers to be said before the Virgin of St. Luke ; and in 752, Pope Stephen III. solemnly implored the protection of this sacred picture against a threatened invasion of the Turks.

But in spite of these notices of the early worship of this picture, which, it must be confessed are of doubtful authenticity, it is not until the thirteenth century, when the adoration of the Virgin-Mother spread with such rapidity over all the civilized world, that we find any really reliable historical references to the painting in the Borghese Chapel. During that century the Popes adopted the Virgin of St. Luke as their patroness and the visible protectress of the Church, and from that time no occupant of the Papal chair has failed to do her honor and reverence. "To her they have gone for assistance when Rome was attacked by flood, pestilence, or famine, or when invasion threatened the holy city, and solemnly gathering before her altar have borne her reverently in procession to the great Basilica of the Prince

of the Apostles." For centuries, every deliverance from real or expected danger has been acknowledged by grateful hymns of praise chanted before her shrine.

It was in the thirteenth century that the Duke of Milan, in great distress at the dangerous and long-continued illness of his only son, who had been given up by all physicians, sought the aid of the Virgin of St. Luke. His prayer was heard, and as a token of his gratitude he sent to the picture a statue of gilded silver of the weight of the child thus healed.

About this same time, the Virgin of St. Luke was adopted as the symbolic signet of Santa Maria Maggiore, and, following an ancient custom long observed in Rome, all property and houses belonging to the Church were marked with a

copy, more or less rough, of the famous picture.

During the pontificate of Innocent VIII. (1484-1492), Spain was greatly harassed by the Moors, who had obtained control of almost the entire kingdom. In their dire extremity the monarchs sent to Rome, and, by prayers offered before her picture, sought the intercession and aid of "Our Lady of Snow," as St. Luke's painting was lovingly called. Their faithful supplications were heard, and through the help thus invoked the Mohammedans were defeated and their power overthrown. In gratitude for this deliverance, Ferdinand and Isabella sent to Alexander VI. (the infamous successor of Innocent VIII.), the first gold brought from America to decorate the church containing the sacred picture, and this gold may to-day

be seen glittering amid the decorations of the ceiling of the Basilica. .

In the year 1518, Leo X., the famous Medici Pope, to whom the world owes so much for his liberal encouragement of art and learning, sought the help of the Virgin against the Turks, and caused the picture to be carried in procession to St. Peter's, he himself following, walking barefoot, and with humbly bowed head, accompanied by all the members of the Sacred College.

The Council of Trent was formally put under the protection of the Virgin of St. Luke, by Julius III. in 1551, and he sent to it the gift of the Golden Rose, blessed by him on the fourth Sunday in Lent.

Clement VIII. (1592-1605), during several years was in the habit of going at night, alone and on foot, from his palace

on the Quirinal to the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. Mounting the steps on his knees he waited, prostrate before the door, until the appointed hour of opening, then, entering, he celebrated Mass before the picture of the Evangelist. This Pope was the first to place on the painted heads of the Virgin-Mother and of her Divine Son, crowns of gold made by a celebrated goldsmith of that time.

During the years of Jubilee the portrait was taken from under its marble canopy in the main aisle of the church and exposed for veneration upon the high altar. The Pope and the entire Sacred College came with solemn pomp and ceremony to adore it, followed by priests of every rank. Throughout the whole year the stream of devout worshippers never ceased, and the walls of the

vast Basilica echoed and re-echoed day and night an endless series of hymns, litanies, and songs of sacred praise.

At the commencement of the sixteenth century, the Virgin of St. Luke still rested under its baldacchino in the nave of Santa Maria Maggiore, where for so many centuries it had received the adoration of the faithful. Sixtus V. had erected a magnificent chapel to contain the manger and other relics of the infancy of Christ, and his successor Paul V. determined to do the same for the wonder-working portrait of the Mother, and gave the order for laying the foundations of the chapel which still bears his name.

The building progressed with great rapidity, the choicest marbles and other precious stones were lavishly used in the construction, and it was gorgeously deco-

rated with paintings and frescos by the great artists of the day. In the details of the decoration, the fact that it was erected to the honor of the Virgin and as a shrine for her portrait, was never for a moment overlooked, and the doctrinal and dogmatic teaching of the Roman Catholic Church in regard to the worship of Mary is emphasized in every picture and statue.

Seven years after the first stone was laid, the chapel was sufficiently near completion to receive the picture, for whose shrine it had been designed, and the greatest pomp and ceremony attended its removal. In order to preserve the precious portrait more carefully, it having already suffered from the ravages of time, the Pope had the painting covered with a plate of gilded silver, richly chased and

adorned with the most precious stones, leaving a small opening which permits only the heads of the Virgin and Child to be seen, together with a very small portion of the body. The finishing touches to the decoration of this chapel had not been put when Paul V. died, leaving the completion and care of it to his family. Nobly have the Borghese princes fulfilled the trust ; by frequent and costly gifts each generation has enriched the shrine ; the magnificent marble altar was the gift of a Borghese princess in 1748.

It is nearly three hundred years since Paul V. placed the sacred picture of the Virgin by the hand of St. Luke in the gorgeous shrine he had prepared, and in his silent tomb at her feet the body of the Sovereign Pontiff reposes, while his kneeling statue seems to be always praying be-

fore the picture he had so honored in his life.

Although this picture is venerated and worshipped in Rome more than any other single object, except possibly the famous Bambino of the Church of Santa Maria Ara-Coeli (which tradition tells us is also the handiwork of St. Luke), the Borghese Chapel is conspicuous for the absence of the votive offerings, and tablets commemorating mercies, or answers to prayer, which can be seen in such great numbers covering the walls of churches containing favorite images of the Virgin, but their absence is due to the feeling of the Popes and of the prelates in charge of the chapel, that such offerings by covering the costly materials of which it is built would detract from the grandeur and stateliness of the shrine.

During the pontificate of Alexander VII. (1655-1658), the members of the parish of Santa Maria Maggiore placed themselves under the protection of the Virgin of St. Luke, and were thus preserved from an epidemic which prevailed in other parts of Rome.

Coming down to more modern times, it is related that while Gregory XVI. occupied the Papal chair (1831-1846), the entire country was ravaged by a pestilence no less terrible than the plagues of ancient days, the safety of the city was menaced, and the Pope, following the example set twelve centuries before by the sainted priest whose name he bore, ordered that the Virgin of St. Luke should once more be borne in solemn procession through the streets of Rome, and venerated in St. Peter's. Rome suffered much less than

other cities of Europe, and the people who had walked weeping and barefooted behind the pictured form of Mary imploring her aid, attributed their comparative immunity from the ravages of the scourge to the protection she, by her intercession in heaven, had afforded them. In recognition of the favor she had granted and to show the gratitude of Pope and citizens, an elaborate service was celebrated in the Borghese Chapel, and a solemn *Te Deum* of thanksgiving was sung before the picture.

In 1849, great disorder reigned in Rome, under the name of a Republic; those who had obtained the ascendancy in the Eternal City having little reverence for anything save gold, or that which could be converted into coin, had seized many of the choice treasures of the various

churches and had despoiled of their gold and jewels many of the richest shrines.

Those who had the care of the wonder-working picture painted by St. Luke, feared with reason that the great riches of the Borghese Chapel would also fall into their impious hands ; moreover there was danger that the precious picture itself would be torn from its position, as pictures in other churches had already been, and, after being stripped of the jewels with which the piety of generations of Sovereign Pontiffs had enriched it, might be sold into unbelieving hands and carried out of the country, simply as a curiosity on account of its age.

“In this extremity,” says the Abbé Milochau, “the Virgin defended herself. Four men sent by the usurpers in authority came to take the inventory of the treas-

ures of the Borghese Chapel ; it was the first step towards spoliation, the clergy being compelled to surrender on demand all articles thus enumerated. At length they gave the order to uncover the sacred picture ; the old priest in charge proceeded to obey the harshly given command, but, before mounting the steps which led to the doors of carved bronze that covered the portrait, he lighted two candles, and knelt, according to usage and the rule of the Church, to intone the litany of the Virgin. The marauders hesitated, and at length asked what was concealed behind those doors. 'An old picture of Our Lady painted on wood,' was the reply, given calmly and unhesitatingly. It was enough ; satisfied that that was all, the men left, and of all the treasures contained in the mighty Basilica, those under the pro-

tection of the Virgin alone escaped confiscation."

The following year, Pius IX. returned to Rome after an exile of eighteen months, and for a time quiet was restored to the Church and troubled city. Three days after his return he celebrated in the Borghese Chapel a solemn Mass of thanksgiving before the Virgin of St. Luke, whom like so many of his predecessors he regarded as his special patroness. By his orders, in 1860, the picture was once more carried in procession through the streets and exposed in the Church of the Jesuits, in order that the protection of Mary might be invoked against the enemies of Rome. It was at this time that the commission of artists made their examination of the picture, as previously mentioned.



LVCAS qui MARIE vitam descripsit et acta,
Libro Euangelij, non sine laude, sua:

Effigiem MARIE veram depinxit, ut inde
Cognita Virgo Dei Mater vniuersae foret.

JAN STRADAN.

Since then great changes, as every one knows, have taken place in Rome; the Pope, shut up in his splendid apartments of the Vatican, where, however, though he may pose as a prisoner his own will is his only jailer, rarely enters even his own adjoining Church of St. Peter, and on the few occasions when he does celebrate Mass there, tickets of admission are issued and rigidly scrutinized before entrance can be obtained. The magnificent and elaborate festival services in the various churches and basilicas of the city, in which in former times the Pontiff was wont to take part, are for the most part discontinued, or, greatly shorn of their splendor, are performed by cardinals representing him.

But though no Pope to-day celebrates Mass at her altar or prays at her shrine, though the solemn processions in which

she was carried through the streets of the city followed by a supplicating crowd are things of the past, the Madonna of St. Luke still reigns over the somewhat cold grandeur of the stately chapel where the pious reverence of a great Pope placed her nearly three centuries ago. In like manner she still retains her supremacy over the hearts of the people, who lovingly address her as "Our Lady of Snow."

Her picture, copied "a thousand times," may be found in every land, and to one of the first copies there is attached a curious and interesting story, which carries us to the shores of the New World.

For many centuries the deep feeling of reverence with which the portrait in Santa Maria Maggiore was regarded, deterred the Popes from permitting artists to make copies of the object of so much love, but

about the year 1570, Francis de Borgia, the second General of the Order of the Jesuits (who, like his predecessor Loyola, was afterward sainted), prevailed upon Pius V. to grant him permission to have a copy made under the following circumstances.

Ignatius Azavedo was on the eve of departure for the distant shores of Brazil, accompanied by a hundred priests and members of the Society of Jesus, charged with the mission of establishing among the natives of that far off land the worship of the true God. They were about to face barbarous people still unknown, to traverse wild and dangerous tracts of country, and to cross seas scoured by pirates more cruel than the savages to whom they were going. Their General wished to put the expedition under the protection and guidance of the Virgin,

and desired above all things that they should carry with them a copy of the true portrait of the Mother of God, to be their stay and comfort in the hours of peril which were sure to come.

Pius V. appreciated this laudable desire on the part of St. Francis, and gave the much wished for permission, and the General immediately employed good artists to make several copies of the sacred picture. Of these two were given to Azavedo : one large one, destined for the altar-piece of the church he hoped to establish among the Indians, and a smaller one to carry with him on his apostolic journeyings, that Mary as the "Mother of the Indians" might be made known to all her children.

Azavedo and some of his companions embarked on the *St. Jacques*, one of a

Portuguese squadron, which started together for the shores of the New World. This little ship was unfortunately separated by an adverse wind from its companions, and while quite alone was attacked by five vessels belonging to the pirate Jacques Sourie.

The crew of the *St. Jacques* consisted of only forty men, but they made an heroic although hopeless defense against their assailant, who could employ the batteries of his five vessels at once. It was useless to fight against such overwhelming numbers and soon they were reluctantly obliged to capitulate, when of the Portuguese seamen only twelve remained alive, and of these there was not one unwounded.

During the combat twenty-nine of the Jesuits descended to the hold, while eleven, the most venerable of the little band, re-

mained on deck to encourage by their presence and to cheer by pious words their heroic defenders, as well as to say the last prayers of the Church over the dying. Azavedo himself stood in the midst, leaning against the mast, holding in his hand the copy of the portrait of the Virgin by St. Luke, and seemed the soul of the defense. The pirates boarded the ship, and one struck the venerable priest rudely on the head, but, though almost blinded by the blood which stained his white hair, the holy Father did not lower his hands, nor did he cease to bless and pray for his flock until, attacked on all sides, he fell pierced with many wounds.

Some hours later not a Jesuit remained alive, and the pirates, clearing the vessel of the bodies of the dead, approached the corpse of Azavedo with the intention of

throwing it into the sea ; they found, still held tenaciously in his stiffened hand, the sacred picture which had been his charge. All efforts to loosen his grasp were unavailing, and they were obliged to throw it overboard with him.

But, unlike all the others, the body of Azavedo did not sink beneath the waves ; it floated upon the surface, the outstretched hand still holding above the raging billows the picture entrusted to its care. During the dark hours of the night, shining with a silvery light, it floated near enough to the bark to be within reach, and one of the Portuguese sailors, whose life had been spared by the pirates, saw it and at the risk of his life took it from the dead hand of the aged priest, whose body, the moment it was relieved of the precious burden, sank to rise no more. This sailor

was able to hide the picture, and after many wonderful adventures he restored it to the Jesuit Fathers in Madeira.

From there, as soon as possible, it was sent to its original destination, where the priests who, more fortunate than their leader Azavedo, had embarked on the other vessels of the Portuguese fleet arrived in safety and founded a Church which grew and flourished. Here in the Church of the Jesuit Fathers at Bahia can to-day be seen the picture, which still shows the marks of the conflict and is stained with the blood of martyrs, evidences of the adventures through which it passed.

Two other copies made at the same time are preserved in Rome by the Jesuits, and a third is in the Jesuit church at Zielonisk, in Poland; from them have been made the copies so common to-day

throughout all lands. Though these copies of copies differ among themselves, the feelings and training of the various artists having changed and modified the features of the Mother and Child until they bear little resemblance to the original, they still preserve the attitude, the coloring, and the arrangement of the drapery, and so give a tolerably faithful idea of the ancient picture whose history we have traced, and which is itself so blackened by age as to be practically invisible.

Many of these copies may be found in the United States, where there have been established many churches and chapels under the protection of the parish priests of Santa Maria Maggiore. These American chapels are united to the great Roman Basilica by secret ties, as daughters to a dear and distant mother, and each of the

sanctuaries possesses as its greatest treasure a copy of the portrait of the Virgin by St. Luke, which, as we have shown, has been for so many generations venerated in the parent Church.

III.

INFLUENCE OF THE PORTRAIT UPON ART.



THOSE who have found pleasure in following the tradition and history of the picture in Santa Maria Maggiore, will be interested in learning the influence the painting itself, as well as the legend connecting it with the hand of the Evangelist, has had upon mediæval and modern art. Before beginning that subject, however, I will quote the description of the famous picture itself, given by the Abbé Milochau.

“The Virgin,” says he, “is standing

three-quarters length, and holds on her left arm her Divine Son, whose right hand is raised to bless the world, while His left holds a book.* The Child is clothed from head to foot, as is always the case in antique pictures. A blue mantle, falling in modest and graceful folds, wraps the entire form of Mary, according to the usage of Jewish women, and being drawn over her head serves at once as a hood and a veil. The head is surrounded with a halo of soft and gentle light, as is also that of the Infant Christ. A small cross of gold is on the mantle covering her forehead, and on her right shoulder a golden star brings to mind her title of "Mary Star of the Sea." Her long and thin hands are crossed upon the

* These two items speak very strongly against the traditional authorship of the picture, as neither the Papal benediction nor bound books with clasps were known in the days of St. Luke, nor for centuries after his time. See frontispiece.



ST. LUKE SKETCHING THE VIRGIN.

ROGER VAN DER WEYDEN.

knee of her child. Both face and form show an incomparable grandeur and nobility, full of simplicity and grace. The inspired painter did not need to put a lily in her hand to typify the purity which illumines the holy countenance, which was never clouded by the shadow of a fault."

Inspired as this description is by the enthusiastic reverence and admiration of a devout Catholic author, it is faithful and exact even to the most minute detail. If we study the works of the early painters of Italy we find that the artists of Florence and Siena in their numerous pictures of the Virgin represented but one type, and any one familiar with the famous Madonnas of Cimabue, or of Duccio, of Giotto, or of Guido da Siena, will be struck by the similarity among them, and by the general resemblance they bear to

this older picture ascribed to St. Luke, while all are consistently faithful to the word-picture of the Mother of the Saviour already quoted from Nicephorus.

The great difference between the early Italian pictures of the Virgin and those of the artists of the German and Flemish schools, may be due to the fact that the latter were ignorant of the tradition describing the personal appearance of Mary, and one writer does not hesitate to ascribe the inferiority of the devotional pictures of the artists of those northern countries, to the fact that they did not know the true portrait of the Virgin by the hand of the Evangelist, which the Italian painters had the privilege of studying. Certain it is, that in every gallery, and above the altars in the dimly lighted churches of Italy, we see the same head

covered with its blue drapery, the same unchildlike Child, the same long thin hands with unnaturally taper fingers, and it is most interesting to trace the gradual growth of life in the wooden, inanimate faces of both Mother and Child, until by degrees they become instinct with grace and individuality.

Since St. Luke was early recognized as the special Evangelist of the Virgin, his was one of the first figures to be introduced into the pictures of the Madonna and Child ; at first merely as one of the attendant and adoring saints, but before long he was given a more active part. In the Roscoe collection of the Liverpool Art-gallery, there is a remarkable little picture by a very early unknown artist, representing the birth of John the Baptist. The Virgin is present holding

the new-born babe, and in the background St. Luke is sitting, pen in hand, writing. In a like manner he is often introduced into old pictures of the Annunciation; there is in the Pinacoteca Vanucci, in Perugia, a curious picture by Benedetto Buonfigli, in which the Evangelist is placed in the centre of the picture, between the Virgin and the angel who comes with his divine message. St. Luke is seated on the ground, the bull by his side; he is writing on a long strip of paper which lies partly on the ground and is partly twined around the horns of the bull like folds of ribbon.

The bull, or rather ox, was early introduced into pictures as the emblem and constant attendant of St. Luke. The four beasts of Revelation early became the recognized type of the four Evangelists,

and as St. Luke, in his Gospel, lays great stress upon the sacrificial nature of the Atonement, the ox was given to him, as one of the animals often used in Jewish sacrifices. It is always present in the pictures of the Evangelist, who is generally represented as writing, while in later pictures the finished painting of the Madonna and Child appears on an easel in the background.

In the series of the four Evangelists by Jean Valentin de Boulogne (1600-1634), now in the Louvre, St. Luke is seated writing, while the picture of the Virgin and Child in the corner, so closely resembles in attitude and drapery the much revered portrait preserved in Santa Maria Maggiore, as to lead to the conclusion that the artist was familiar, not only with the tradition ascribing it to the brush

of the Apostle, but with the famous painting itself. In this picture the bull's head only appears in the lower corner.

Another picture of the Evangelist, in the Louvre, is by Jacopo Chimenti da Empoli, and shows St. Luke holding a pen and book, seated at the feet of the Virgin and Child, who are supported by clouds and surrounded by angels. Near St. Luke is the symbolic ox.

In an old engraving (by Gabriel Smith), St. Luke is represented as a thin ascetic-looking man seated, pen in hand, at a table on which is an open book leaning against a pile of closed ones. On the ground lies a palette and a bundle of brushes, while in the background, on an easel which is partially concealed by a heavy curtain, is the finished picture, the outlines of the Mother and Child being



Saint-Luc Évangéliste.

very indistinct. Under the easel lies the bull, a solemn-looking beast, with very widespread horns.

A very curious engraving of a ceiling painting shows the Apostle borne to heaven on the clouds, partly supported by the winged bull, on whose back lie the palette, brushes, and mahl-stick. St. Luke holds a book in his left hand, and his head is thrown back in order that he may gaze at the portrait of the Virgin which is held up by an angel. This picture is engraved by Bergmüller, but the name of the artist does not appear.

St. Luke is represented in a similar manner in the dome of the Roman Catholic Cathedral in Baltimore.

There is in Munich an interesting picture long ascribed to Jan Van Eyck, the famous inventor of painting in oil, but

now considered by the best authorities to be the work of his pupil and successor Roger Van der Weyden. In one of the stately interiors, such as the old artists loved to paint, the Virgin appears seated on a low bench with her Son in her arms, while St. Luke kneels opposite and draws on a very small piece of paper. Through the elaborately carved columns of the background is seen a river and landscape. The whole picture so closely resembles the "Virgin with Donor," by Van Eyck, in the Louvre, that it seems as if he must have had something to do with it; certainly his was the inspiration. A good replica of this picture may be seen in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

A similar but more elaborate and beautiful representation of the same subject is in Prague, where it long formed the altar-

piece of the Cathedral ; now, however, it is in the fine Art-gallery there. It also was for many years attributed to Van Eyck, and afterwards to Van Orley, but when it was removed from the position over the high altar which it had so long occupied, a close examination showed the signature, on the girdle of St. Luke, of the somewhat later artist Jean Gossaert, more commonly known as Jean de Mabuse.

Another picture of the same scene in the Prague gallery, is by Scretta.

St. Luke was early considered to be the patron saint of all painters, and organizations of artists in various countries were called by his name. One of these, the Guild of St. Luke, was composed of Flemish painters, and was in existence as early as 1525. This guild, to which for centuries it was considered an honor to

belong, adopted as its coat-of-arms the bull's head, painted on a shield together with the implements of painting.

As early as 1355 a Society of Sienese painters claimed St. Luke as their brother-artist and patron, as did the Florentine artists a few years later. Another society was the *Confrérie* of St. Luke in Rome, which was placed under the special protection of the Virgin of the Evangelist. The artists forming this organization founded in 1577 a school of painting known as the Academy of St. Luke, which still exists. In connection with it is a gallery, which, though small, contains some excellent pictures. The most celebrated is the picture of St. Luke painting the Virgin, which is said to have been painted by Raphael for the altar-piece of the Oratory of the *Confrérie*.

Most authorities agree that it is not the work of the great artist, but of one of his pupils, though possibly Raphael himself may have designed it. Monsieur Gruyer in his work "*Les Vierges de Raphael*," agrees with this view, and adduces as a proof the portrait of Raphael in the background, which, he says, never appears in pictures entirely by the master himself, and when found in those ascribed to him, is in reality the work of his scholars. Passavant says that the picture was the work of several hands, but that the head of the Evangelist was undoubtedly the work of Raphael.

The painting itself is quite unworthy of Raphael, in both color and composition ; it represents St. Luke kneeling with one knee on a footstool before an easel, while he paints the Virgin, who, with her

Son in her arms, stands on the extreme left of the picture ; behind him crouches the bull, while in the background stands a young man, whose face is the portrait of Raphael as mentioned.

A much better and more beautiful picture of the same subject is in the fine private gallery of the Duke of Westminster, Grosvenor House, London ; it was long attributed to Raphael, and is so ascribed by Mrs. Jameson, as well as by the owner's catalogue. More recently, however, art critics have decided that it is entirely the work of Giulio Romano, the pupil of Raphael who is said to have worked on every picture of his master. The picture is a small one and represents St. Luke seated on the ground, Turkish fashion, holding the canvas in his left hand while he paints with his right. Mary is



ST. LUKE PAINTING THE VIRGIN.

RAPHAEL.



seated at the foot of a bed and holds the Child, who stands on her knee, and turns away as if frightened. In the background Joseph holds a door partially open and looks in as if afraid of intruding, and behind him is seen a balcony on which a man appears to be gazing at the distant landscape.

Of all the numerous pictures which represent the Evangelist in the act of painting the portrait of the Virgin, the finest is, I think, the beautiful one by Mignard in the Louvre. In it the Madonna and Child appear to the Apostle on a cloud as if in a vision. It is the only one I have seen in which the picture on the easel, bears any resemblance to the figures from which it is taken. The Virgin and Child are graceful in attitude and very lovely in expression. The attendant has the features of Mignard.

A very curious engraving of an old picture by Jan Stradan shows a crowded interior. The Virgin appears seated on a cloud ; St. Luke, who wears a halo which closely resembles a palette, rests his canvas against his knee ; behind him an attendant is grinding colors, while another holds a palette and brushes. Beneath an unused easel at one side lies the bull ; in the background is a reading desk, and a shelf full of books. Underneath is the inscription :

*Lucas qui Mariæ vitam descripsit et acta,
Libro Evangelii non sine laudi fui ;
Effigiam Mariæ veram depinxit et unde
Cognita Virgo Dei Mater ubique foret.**

In a modern German picture by

* " Luke who described the life and acts of Mary was not praised for the book of the gospel alone ; the true image of Mary he painted, that hence the knowledge of the Virgin-Mother of God might everywhere be known."

Owexer, angels are introduced, some singing to musical instruments, others presenting offerings of gold and jewels to the Child, and St. Luke in the act of painting rests his canvas on a lectern.

Another engraving represents St. Luke in the dress of an ecclesiastic standing before an easel, while the Virgin appears in the clouds ; in the foreground is the recumbent figure of the bull.

A curious old design in yellow, for stained glass, turns St. Luke into a fat monk with a wig ; an attendant grinds the colors. The Virgin does not appear, and the bull is curiously misshapen.

In the Aguado Gallery, Spain, there is a picture of the same subject in which an angel grinds the colors, and in one by Carlo Maratta the Evangelist presents his finished picture to the Virgin.

There is also a picture by Aldegræf in Vienna representing this subject.

A picture in the Louvre by Annibale Carracci, represents St. Luke imploring the blessing of the Virgin, who appears in the clouds surrounded by the other Evangelists; at St. Luke's feet are a palette and brushes; at the right St. Catharine, with her foot on the wheel, points out the celestial vision.

Lorenzo Baldi painted the same subject, and his picture was engraved as early as 1692. Franceschini, Lebault, Clerian, and Granet have also left pictures of their saintly brother-artist at work.

In the Antwerp Museum there is a picture, by Franz Floris, of St. Luke painting the Virgin, of which Kügler writes: "This picture is most interesting on account of the character and truthfulness

of the heads. The artist has given the Saint the likeness of his friend, the painter Ryckaert Aertsz, and has painted his own portrait in the character of the color-grinder. The way in which the bull is rendered shows the tastelessness of Floris."

Paul Veronese also painted this subject, and in the little Church of San Luca in Venice is an altar-piece, mentioned by Ruskin, representing St. Luke and the Virgin.

IV.

ADDITIONAL WORKS OF ART ATTRIBUTED TO ST. LUKE.



Y far the most famous of the pictures attributed to the hand of St. Luke is that portrait of the Virgin preserved in the Borghese Chapel of Santa Maria Maggiore; there are many others, however, in Italy and other countries, all devoutly believed in by thousands of people. While to no one of these pictures is there attached such a history as to that so long revered in the Basilica of Liberius, each has its own story. Some of these legends are

mere imitations of the one we have been tracing, and can be directly referred to it, and therefore, while giving a list of the pictures themselves, it will not be necessary to repeat their history. Early and interesting traditions are told of two of the portraits ascribed to St. Luke, which were revered in Constantinople.

The first of these pictures was, as already mentioned, the one sent by the Empress Eudoxia to Pulcheria, in Constantinople, who built to receive it a magnificent church. For many centuries it was regarded with the greatest reverence, and was considered as the Palladium of the Empire. In times of danger it was taken from its shrine, and carried in solemn procession through the city, and often were the besieging infidels put to flight by the sight of this sacred pic-

ture displayed in the front ranks of the army. Several copies of this picture exist to-day; one is in Rome, and one is revered in a village church on the island of Sardinia.

When the Turks finally obtained possession of Constantinople, they despoiled all the churches of the city, robbing them of their treasures, and desecrating them in every possible way. In the portrait of the Virgin they recognized the power which had often brought defeat to their troops, and, tearing it from its shrine they dragged it ignominiously through the streets, where it had so often been borne by reverent hands, covered it with filth, and at length tore it in pieces.

Such is the story told by historians; nevertheless, we are shown in Venice to-day a small picture, so blackened by time

as to be almost indistinguishable, now called the Virgin "Niko-peja," or Bringer of Victory, which we are assured was the very portrait painted by St. Luke found in Palestine by Eudoxia. The Queen of Heaven, they say, would not permit her picture to be destroyed by infidel hands, and it was miraculously preserved and hidden for centuries by humble, faithful persons, who did not disclose the secret of its existence until, in 1204, the blind old Doge Dandolo, at the head of the Venetian fleet, successfully laid siege to the Byzantine city. Among all the treasures which he brought back to Venice, which are still to be seen in the magnificent Church of San Marco, above whose portals

" still stand the steeds of brass,
Their golden collars glittering in the sun,"

not the least was the portrait of the Virgin painted by St. Luke, and to-day, in a lavishly decorated chapel in the gorgeous Venetian Basilica, is still revered the picture, doubly precious on account of the vicissitudes through which it has passed. Until recently it has been carried in procession through the streets of Venice in order to obtain either rain or fair weather.

A third story tells how the picture obtained by the Empress Pulcheria was taken from the magnificent church which she built to contain it, by Leon, Duke of Russia, who gave it to one of his followers. The new owner wished to transport it to his own city, but when they reached a mountain about ten leagues from Cracow it was found to be impossible to take it farther, for the picture acquired such immense weight that no force could remove

it, and it became necessary to build a church around it and leave it in the position it had chosen for itself, where it is still shown. This took place in 1380.

The story of another picture by the Evangelist, revered in the East, is told in the "Annals of Francesco Maria di Aste." He relates that when Mahomet II. took Otranto in 1480, he massacred priests of every rank, eight hundred ecclesiastics being believed to have perished by his orders. A priest named Stephen was slain while saying Mass, and as his head fell from his body, the Madonna of St. Luke, which decorated the altar at which he was officiating, was miraculously snatched from its position, and carried to heaven by angelic hands, and thus preserved from infidel desecration.

Of the pictures in Italy ascribed to St.

Luke, one of the most famous is preserved in the handsome church called the Madonna di San Luca, on the Monte della Guardia, a hill about three miles from Bologna. Of this picture the following legend is related. About the year 433, a Greek ecclesiastic of great reputation saw in the Church of St. Sophia in Constantinople a picture bearing the strange inscription: "This picture painted by St. Luke should be carried into Italy, and to the Monte della Guardia, where it will become the altar-piece of a Church." Inspired by heaven this priest asked and obtained possession of the picture, which he carried into Italy, but for a long time he sought in vain for the "Monte della Guardia." At length he met a peasant named Pacipovero, who told him that near his native town Bologna there was a hill bearing

that name. Led by this peasant the weary priest reached the spot, and ere long the picture became indeed the altar-piece of a church built on the summit of the little hill.

Once a year this picture, even blacker and uglier than most of those to which the same origin is ascribed, and proportionately revered, is taken from its shrine, and carried in procession into the city, where, placed in the Cathedral, it receives the adoration of the people. To protect it from rain or sun on this yearly journey, the pious Bolognese of two centuries ago (1676), built a series of covered arcades extending all the way from the gate of the city to the church itself. These arcades consist of 635 arches, opening on either side into numerous chapels, and are more than a mile and a half in length. Guido Reni, whose paintings of the Vir-

gin are so beautiful, and so full of grace and life, was wont to go daily to the hill above the city to pray before the black and ungraceful picture of the Virgin of St. Luke.

There is a Virgin and Child ascribed to St. Luke in the Church of the Impruneta, a place of pilgrimage not far from Florence. Another is in the parish church of the little village of Grotto Ferrata near Frascati. A third is the chief treasure of the chapel of the Abbaye di Farfa, and is said to have been brought from Palestine by St. Lawrence the Syrian, the founder and first Abbot of the Monastery. A fourth is in the Cathedral at Undine, and a fifth in the Cathedral at Padua. The last two are figured in Mrs. Jameson's "Legends of the Madonna."

In Rome itself, there are seven pictures



ST. LUKE PAINTING THE VIRGIN.

MIGNARD

of the Virgin ascribed to St. Luke, besides the one in Santa Maria Maggiore. One of these, preserved in Santa Maria Ara-Coeli, is by some declared to be the one carried by Gregory the Great in 590 to avert the plague, but the history of that picture can not be traced nearly so far back as the one in the Borghese Chapel.

One is shown in the Catacombs, one in Santa Maria in Via Lata, one receives veneration in the Church of Santa Maria di Popolo, and one, the most beautiful of all, in the little Church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin. There is also one in the Church of St. Dominic and St. Sixtus, which is the subject of the following curious narrative, carved on a marble tablet in the church.

“ Here at the high altar, is preserved a most holy image of the Virgin, painted by

the hand of St. Luke. Long venerated in the East, at the approach of danger it came of its own accord to this city, and lay concealed not far from the Hospice of the three brothers Tempulus, Servulus, and Cereolus, natives of Constantinople, at that time living in Rome. Tempulus, having discovered the picture, was warned by a heavenly voice that it should be placed in the tower of the convent of the holy Agatha, and divine honor paid to it. This was done, and many miracles were performed by the sacred picture, bringing great prosperity to the convent.

Sergius III., with mistaken zeal, ordered that it should be carried to the Lateran, where it could be more generally venerated. The nuns bewailed its loss, and begged to retain their beloved picture, but in vain ; it was torn from them, and the procession of

priests and choristers started to bear the sacred image to its new home. Suddenly a fierce storm arose, and the frightened bearers found it impossible to proceed; the priests sought the advice of the Pontiff, who, hastening to the spot, bore the picture with his own hands to the place in the Lateran he had destined for it. The following morning it was missing; messengers sought the convent and learned the following wonderful story of its restoration. Late at night, while the Abbess and nuns were praying and deploring the loss of their beloved picture, it flew through the window, before their astonished and delighted eyes, and took its original position over the altar. By this miracle the Sovereign Pontiff was convinced of his rashness, and confirmed to the convent the possession of the heavenly gift.

“Later, when the virgins were removed to the convent of St. Sixtus, they took the precious picture with them, and so it came into this church.” *

Another picture, ascribed to the hand of St. Luke, is the one familiarly known as “Our Lady of Mt. Carmel.” According to the tradition, taught and believed to-day, by the Roman Catholic Church, this picture was brought from Mount Carmel, in Palestine, to Naples, by St. Angelus of Jerusalem, a Carmelite monk, in the year 1223, when the conquest by the Moham-medans forced the Christians to leave Judea. It was placed above the altar of the church which was attached to the new Monastery of the Carmelites in Naples, and soon became celebrated for its miracles.

* Percy's Romanism.

In 1500, the Neapolitans bore the picture with them processionally in a great pilgrimage to Rome ; crowds of sick, lame, and blind thronged the pathway of the image to the very gates of the Eternal City, and none implored its aid in vain. Even the bells of the churches and convents along the road taken by the pilgrims rang out of their own accord as the sacred picture passed. After the return of the picture to Naples, King Conrad IV. invited all the maimed, halt, blind, and palsied throughout his kingdom to come and be healed by Santa Maria del Carmine. " On the appointed day the church was filled with thousands of suffering creatures, Mass was sung, and the picture was unveiled and exposed for the veneration of the multitude. Bright rays of light were seen to illumine the dark face of the Ma-

donna, the reflection from which was so brilliant as to fall upon the unfortunates lying and kneeling beneath, who were suddenly and instantly healed of their divers ills. At the moment when the rays of light overspread the picture of the Madonna, all the bells of the city chimed in sweet accord, untouched by human hands, to swell the glad chorus of praise and thanksgiving which ascended in gracious melody to the throne of Heaven's Queen." This picture is now preserved in Rome in the Church of the Calced Carmelites, Santa Maria in Transpontina.

Outside of Italy we read of a picture of the Virgin and Child painted by St. Luke, which is held in great veneration in Guadaloupe, Spain, and is said to have been sent by St. Gregory the Great to his friend St. Leander, then Bishop of Seville.

This picture was early celebrated for the miracles which it performed, and was held in such love and veneration that, when the Moors overran Spain, the people of Seville, fearing lest the precious painting should fall into their unhallowed hands, hid it in the grotto of Guadaloupe, where together with the body of St. Fulgence it remained for six hundred years. At the end of that time the Virgin appeared in a vision to a shepherd and revealed the secret of the hidden picture. It was brought out of the cavern where for so many years it lay concealed, and as it was carried through the streets the son of a peasant, who had fallen dead suddenly, was restored to life by the presence of the picture.

A picture of the Virgin, said to have been painted by St. Luke, is preserved in the Church of "Our Lady of the Letter"

in Messina, Sicily ; it is greatly revered, and bears a Greek inscription which may be freely translated : “ She who quickly hears our prayers.”

In Lyons there is a picture of Mary ascribed to St. Luke, said to have been brought from Palestine to France by St. Pothin, who died A.D. 177.

On the festival of St. Luke, October 18th, all the pictures in Rome which are ascribed to him are uncovered and exposed to the veneration of the people.

On a slope of Mount Libanus, about three leagues from Damascus, is the village of Sardenais, and in a church there, is preserved a picture of the Virgin, said to have been painted by St. Luke, and celebrated for having performed many miracles. This is probably the picture mentioned by Lanzi, as previously quoted,

and referred by him to a monk of Lebanon bearing the name of the Evangelist.

At La Valette in the island of Malta, is a picture known as "Our Lady of Damascus," said to have been painted by St. Luke. It was formerly invoked in times of danger, and especially against attacks of the Saracens.

The most highly venerated Icon in St. Petersburg, which played a prominent part in the funeral ceremonies of the late Czar, is a portrait of the Virgin ascribed to St. Luke. It is richly decorated with jewels, and is said to have belonged to the Knights of Malta.

The Virgin of Casopo, at Corcyra, is also said to be the handiwork of St. Luke.

Besides these pictures we are shown in various places examples of St. Luke's skill in wood-carving.

Of these the most famous is the Santo Bambino, a small wooden image of the Christ-Child, which is perhaps the most venerated object in all Rome.

“Garnished from throat to foot with rings
And brooches and precious offerings
And its little nose quite kissed away
By dying lips.”

Dedicated to it is a magnificent chapel in the Church of Santa Maria Ara-Cœli ; it has its own order of attendant priests, and special prayers and hymns addressed to it. In former years when any rich Roman lady was ill, she sent for the Bambino, who was brought to visit her in its own carriage ; miraculous cures are said to have resulted from its touch, and it received higher fees than any physician in Rome.

One story concerning it is well known :



SANTO BAMBINO.

A very wealthy woman who had on several occasions been cured, but at a great cost, by the visit of the Bambino, conceived the idea of stealing it, and caused an exact imitation of it to be made which she substituted for the precious image while it lay upon her bed. The priests, whose duty it was to care for the little figure, did not detect the fraud, but bore away the sham Bambino with all the reverence due to the genuine one. The night was dark and stormy, and some time after midnight the priest whose duty it was to watch the shrine heard a knocking to which at first he paid no attention, but finally the noise was so persistent that he was obliged to get up and open the door. What was his astonishment and fright to see outside in the wind and storm the sacred little figure he had thought safe within, kicking the

door with great force, its arms being bound by the swaddling clothes ! The fraud being thus brought to light, the false Bambino was instantly taken from the place it had usurped and the real one restored ; and to-day they point to the toes broken by kicking the hard door as proof of the truth of the story.

According to another version of this legend the Santissimo Bambino was carved by a pilgrim out of a tree which grew on the Mount of Olives, and was painted by St. Luke while the pilgrim slept.

In the little village of Biella in Savoy, there is a figure of the Virgin, six feet in height, carved in cedar wood, revered as the handiwork of St. Luke. This image, we are told, was brought from Jerusalem by Eusebius, Bishop of Vercell, who was afterwards martyred and sainted. Euse-

buis built a chapel to contain the precious figure about the year 380, and often sought help and comfort there during the troublous times of persecution.

Another famous and highly revered wooden image said to have been made by St. Luke, is the Madonna in the Casa Santa in Loretto. Every one is familiar with the legend of the miraculous removal of the house of Bethlehem, its transportation by angels through the air, the several places where it stopped for a while, and its final establishment at Loretto, where it has been for centuries the favorite place of resort for pilgrims of all nations. In this house is a wooden figure of the Virgin, rudely carved, which is dressed gorgeously in silks, lace, and jewels, "and in a curled white wig looks wondrous fine." This figure, revered as the work of the Evange-

list, is said to have been brought from Bethlehem with the house.

St. Luke is also said to have painted several pictures of the Saviour: the most celebrated is the one already mentioned, preserved in the Sancta Sanctorum, said to have been finished by the hands of angels; of the others attributed to him no traces exist and the traditions are very uncertain.

That the Evangelist even after his death continued to be the guide and inspiration of painters many writers tell us, and a pretty tradition informs us that on one occasion he gave practical aid to a perplexed artist. In the beautiful church in Florence, built in loving adoration of the mystery of the Annunciation and called the Santissima Nunziata, there is a miraculous picture of the Annunciation held in the greatest veneration.

It was begun by a certain painter named Bartolommeo, who brought to the task a great devotion for the Virgin, together with a deep humility and sense of his own unworthiness. The picture was nearly finished, only the face of the Virgin was lacking; the painter could find no model whose features realized his ideal of the Mother of God, and he dared not trust his own imaginings. Utterly discouraged at length he fell asleep, before his canvas, while praying for aid; he dreamed that his prayer had been heard and that the Virgin had sent St. Luke to the aid of his humble and discouraged fellow-artist. When he awoke he found that his dream was a reality, his picture was finished, and the face of the Virgin shone with a glorious and unearthly beauty. This picture is preserved in a magnificent chapel; the beau-

tiful features of the Madonna are hidden by a veil, on which is painted a head of the Saviour by Andrea del Sarto, and only on great festivals is it shown to the faithful. Before the shrine forty-two lamps of silver burn night and day, and devout worshippers kneel continually before it.

"Whatever may be thought of its theological propriety, there can be little doubt that the Catholic reverence for the VIRGIN has done much to elevate and purify the ideal of woman, and to soften the manners of men."

WILLIAM EDWARD HARTPOLE LECKY.

INDEX.

Academy of St. Luke	68
Acheiropoëton	17
American Gold	53
Andrea of Crete, quoted	24
Artists who have Represented St. Luke as a Painter :	
Aldegraef (1502-1558)	92
Baldi, Lorenzo	92
Bergmüller, Engraver	83
Buonfigli, Benedetto (1425-1496)	80
Carracci, Annibale (1560-1609)	92
Chimenti da Empoli, Jacopo (1554-1640)	82
Clerian	92
Floris, Franz (1517-1570)	92
Franceschini (1648-1729)	92
Granet (1775-1849)	92
Lebault	92
Mabuse, Jean de (1470-1541)	85
Maratta, Carlo (1625-1713)	91

Mignard (1606-1668)	89
Owexer	91
Raphael (1483-1520)	86
Romano, Giulio (1492-1546)	88
Screta, Carl (1604-1674)	85
Smith, Gabriel, Engraver	82
Stradan, Jan (1523-1605)	90
Valentin de Boulogne, Jean (1600-1634)	81
Van der Weyden, Roger (1399-1464)	84
Van Orley (1491-1542)	85
Veronese, Paul (1528-1588)	93
Azavedo, Ignatius	67
Bambino, Legend of	112
Borghese Chapel	7, 56
Cadrenus, quoted	26
Casa Santa	115
Castle of St. Angelo, Legend of	47
Confrérie of St. Luke	86
Copies of St. Luke's Madonna	72
Council of Ephesus	33
Council of Trent	54
Darras, quoted	17
Description of St. Luke's Madonna	75
Donna Orante	30
Earliest Mention of St. Luke's Madonna	23
Epiphanius, quoted	26
Eudoxia, Empress	23, 95
Golden Rose	54

Gruyer, quoted	87
Guild of Flemish Artists	85
Guild of Florentine Artists	86
Guild of Sienese Artists	86
Images Carved by St. Luke	112, 114, 115
Lanzi, quoted	35, 38
Leon, Duke of Russia	98
Luke, a Greek Artist	36
Luke of Florence	37
Luke the Hermit	38
Mahomet II.	99
Mary, Features of	26
Maynard, quoted	19
Milochau, quoted	18, 75
Miracles Performed by St. Luke's Madonnas :	
In 590	45
In 641	50
In 904	104
In XIIIth Century	52, 106
In 1480	99
In 1484	53
In 1500	107
In 1570	67
In 1655	60
In 1831	60
In 1849	62
In XIXth Century	98
At Guadaloupe	109

Monte della Guardia	100
Mt. Carmel, Our Lady of	106
Murillo (1618-1682)	4
Nestorian Heresy	32
Niko-peja	97
Origin of the Group Madonna and Child	32
Ox, Emblem of St. Luke	80
Places where St. Luke's Madonnas are Pre- served :	
Bahia (copy)	72
Biella, Savoy	114
Bologna	100
Catacombs, Rome	103
Corcyra	111
Cracow	98
Farfa	102
Frascati	102
Guadaloupe	108
Impruneta	102
La Valette, Malta	111
Loretto	115
Lyons	110
Messina	110
Padua	102
Santa Maria in Ara-Coeli	103
Santa Maria in Cosmedin	103
Santa Maria Maggiore	1
Santa Maria di Popolo	103

Santa Maria in Transpontina	108
Santa Maria in Via Lata	42, 103
St. Dominic and St. Sixtus	103
St. Petersburg	111
Sardenais	110
Undine	102
Venice	97
Zielenisk (copy)	72
Popes :	
Alexander VI.	53
Alexander VII.	43, 60
Benedict XIV.	21
Clement VIII.	54
Gregory the Great	46, 108
Gregory XVI.	60
Innocent VIII.	53
Julius III.	54
Leo X.	54
Liberius	2, 44
Martin I.	54
Paul V.	56, 67
Pelagius	46
Pius IX.	64
Sergius I.	50
Sergius III.	104
Stephen III.	50
Presence of the Picture in Rome Explained	42
Sancta Sanctorum	17

Santa Maria in Ara-Coeli	103, 112
Santa Maria Maggiore :	
Celebration of Founding	1
Relics in	6
Signet of	52
Santa Maria ad Nives	4, 66
Santissima Nunziata	116
Santo Bambino	112
Schlegel's Legend of St. Luke	9
Simon Metaphrastes, quoted	25
Snow, Miraculous	3
St. Augustine	29
St. Helena	44
St. Luke's Biography	18
St. Luke Painting the Madonna after his Death	117
St. Luke Reporting the Birth of John the Baptist	79
Stendal, quoted	20
Theodore the Scribe, quoted	23
Theophilus, Emperor	24
Theophilus of Rome	44
Tournefort, quoted	38
Towns in which Pictures Representing St. Luke Painting the Virgin are Found :	
Aguado	91
Antwerp	92
Baltimore	83

Boston	84
Liverpool	79
London	88
Munich	83
Paris (Louvre)	81, 82, 89, 92
Prague	84
Perugia	80
Rome	86
Venice	93
Vienna	92

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The Madonna of St. Luke; the story of a portrait, by Henrietta Irving Bolton ... New York, London, G. P. Putnam's sons, 1895.

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